DETAILED ACTION

The following Office Action is a response to communications filed on March 4, 2010.

Currently, claims 1, 6, and 7 are pending and have been allowed. This action includes an

examiner's reasons for allowance.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art is Ghodsypour ("A Decision Support System for Supplier Selection

Using an Integrated Analytic Hierarchy Process and Linear Programming"), Rosenblatt ("An

Acquisition Policy for a Single Item Multi-Supplier System"), Huang (US 6,151,582), Baseman

(US 6,671,673), Weber (US 2002/0156663), and Baumann (US 7,389,248).

Ghodsypour teaches determining how much supply to purchase from multiple suppliers

using linear programming techniques as well as considering additional tangible and intangible

factors such as those claimed. However, Ghodsypour does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia,

"solving linear programming models to determine how an order quantity of a desired item is to

be split between multiple supplier, wherein the solving comprises: determining a first optimal

solution by solving a first iteration that ignores lot sizing restrictions, and determining a second

optimal solution by solving a second iteration that considers the two closest values to the first

optimal solution that are multiples of a desired lot size."

Rosenblatt teaches developing an acquisition policy to obtain supplies from a set of

potential suppliers, including which suppliers to purchase from and what quantity of supplies to

purchase. However, Rosenblatt does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia, "solving linear

programming models to determine how an order quantity of a desired item is to be split between

multiple supplier, wherein the solving comprises: determining a first optimal solution by solving

a first iteration that ignores lot sizing restrictions, and determining a second optimal solution by

solving a second iteration that considers the two closest values to the first optimal solution that

are multiples of a desired lot size."

Huang (US 6,151,582) teaches a decision support system for managing agile supply

chains which considers various supply channel models, supply chain planning, purchase

schedules, and enterprise compliance in generating purchase plans as claimed. However, Huang

does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia, "solving linear programming models to determine how

an order quantity of a desired item is to be split between multiple supplier, wherein the solving

comprises: determining a first optimal solution by solving a first iteration that ignores lot sizing

restrictions, and determining a second optimal solution by solving a second iteration that

considers the two closest values to the first optimal solution that are multiples of a desired lot

size."

Baseman (US 6,671,673) teaches integrating supply chain and financial management by

considering supply channel models, output purchase schedules, and enterprise compliance as

claimed. However, Baseman does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia, "solving linear

programming models to determine how an order quantity of a desired item is to be split between

multiple supplier, wherein the solving comprises: determining a first optimal solution by solving

a first iteration that ignores lot sizing restrictions, and determining a second optimal solution by

solving a second iteration that considers the two closest values to the first optimal solution that

are multiples of a desired lot size."

Weber (US 2002/0156663) teaches optimizing a supply chain by considering many of the same parameters as the claimed invention, including various supply chain models, purchase costs and quantities, source/vendor locations, tax information. Furthermore, Weber uses linear programming techniques to create an optimal purchase plan. However, Weber does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia, "solving linear programming models to determine how an order quantity of a desired item is to be split between multiple supplier, wherein the solving comprises: determining a first optimal solution by solving a first iteration that ignores lot sizing restrictions, and determining a second optimal solution by solving a second iteration that considers the two closest values to the first optimal solution that are multiples of a desired lot size."

Baumann (US 7,389,248) teaches selecting a low cost supplier. Baumann considers many of the same parameters as the claimed invention, including supplier costs, material costs, production costs, demand, and order quantities. Although Baumann teaches a way to determine which suppliers to purchase from, Baumann does not teach or fairly suggest, inter alia, "solving linear programming models to determine how an order quantity of a desired item is to be split between multiple supplier, wherein the solving comprises: determining a first optimal solution by solving a first iteration that ignores lot sizing restrictions, and determining a second optimal solution by solving a second iteration that considers the two closest values to the first optimal solution that are multiples of a desired lot size."

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for

Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Neil R. Kardos whose telephone number is (571) 270-3443. The

examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Beth Boswell can be reached on (571) 272-6737. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would

like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated

information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

<div style="text-align: right">

Neil R. Kardos
Examiner
Art Unit 3623

</div>

/Neil R. Kardos/
Examiner, Art Unit 3623

/Beth V. Boswell/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3623